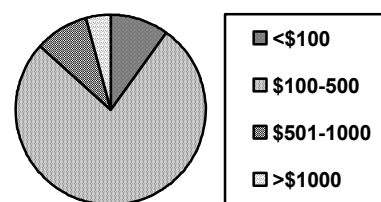


homes for the destitute, the orphan, and the widow.”<sup>58</sup> The county deed index shows that the American Union Association acquired two entire blocks in 1897 and 1899 and then divided the blocks, registering 45 deeds for men and women in those blocks between 1897 and 1919.<sup>59</sup> Statewide in 1890, about 14 percent of the black population owned their homes as compared to approximately 35 percent of the white population. In Wilmington, of the black population that owned property, only 10 percent had property valued under \$100. The upper class of black property holders, those whose property was valued over \$1,000, represented only 4 percent of the population. The largest property-owning value bracket, 77 percent of the group under examination, encompassed those who owned property valued between \$100 and \$500.<sup>60</sup>

Gregory Normal Institute, ca. 1910.  
Image from W. N. Hartshorn and George W. Penniman,  
eds., *An Era of Progress and Promise, 1863-1910: The  
Religious, Moral, and Educational Development of the  
American Negro Since his Emancipation*

African American Property Values, 1897



\* Source: Wilmington, New Hanover County Tax Roll, State Archives, North Carolina Office of Archives and History, Raleigh.



<sup>58</sup> New Hanover County Incorporations, State Archives. Members of the Association's board were: General Superintendent Reverend Anderson Stroud, Vice President W. H. Capehart, Secretary A.J. Andrews, Treasurer Isham Thompson, and Judiciary Committee members Anthony Davis, James Simmons, and Joseph Williams.

<sup>59</sup> The Association acquired block 540 in 1897 and 541 in 1899. The blocks were located in the northeastern section of town and were bounded by Anderson, Miller, Rankin and Woods Streets. Subdivided portions of each block were then redistributed. The American Union Association handled the most deeds in 1898 (7) and 1899 (9), with activity ranging from 1 to 4 deeds in subsequent years. New Hanover County Incorporations, New Hanover County Grantor/Grantee Index, State Archives.

<sup>60</sup> Of Wilmington's black population 8 percent owned taxable real estate in 1890. Wilmington Tax Roll, New Hanover County Records, State Archives, North Carolina Office of Archives and History, Raleigh. For more on this topic, see Cody, "After the Storm," and Appendix D.

Along with the development of wealth, Wilmington's African American community showed a strong commitment to education. The first schools for black children were opened by northern benevolent societies and the Freedmen's Bureau near the end of the Civil War. Following that lead, the African American community slowly began to manage its own educational system. Black leaders served on the county school board, trained and hired local black school teachers and administrators, and created local support organizations to manage the education of Wilmington's first and second generations of children who had never known slavery. The Peabody School was first supported by the Freedmen's Bureau, but a local support group called the Wilmington Colored